Generation Y on the labour market and the new forms of education

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Abstract: The article examines the labour market needs of Generation Y and the significance of alternative learning methods. It highlights the impact of non-formal and informal education in developing workplace skills and abilities. Through a survey of Generation Y employees in Romania, the study evaluates the importance of new learning contexts for personal development, well-being, and continuous learning motivation. The research focuses on qualitative data analysis to explore the alternative learning experiences and needs of Generation Y in the labour market. Additionally, the article emphasizes the positive role of European youth programs in helping young people acquire valuable skills for the workforce.

Keywords: Generation Y, education, labour market

Introduction

The article highlights the needs of Generation Y on the labour market and the importance of alternative forms of learning. At the same time, it emphasizes the impact of non-formal as well as informal education in acquiring useful skills and abilities at the workplace. The empirical research carried out by means of a questionnaire aimed at evaluating the importance of alternative forms of education in acquiring the necessary skills on the labour market. The article focuses on the analysis of qualitative data regarding the alternative learning experiences of the respondents as well as the needs of members of Generation Y in the labour market.

1. The need for new types of education

1.1. What is education?

The word education derives from the noun "education" which means growth, nurturing, cultivation. Education has the task of preparing man as an active element of social life. According to the definition, education is "the set of measures systematically applied in order to train and develop the intellectual, moral or physical

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qualities of children and youth or people, society, etc. The result of this pedagogical activity is good growth and civilized behaviour in society. To offer education to someone is to educate someone" (Coteanu, 1998).

According to the Sociology of Education, education systems refer to the set of institutions of a society involved in the education of people, in a certain historical period. As a subsystem of the global social system, it is also called the "institution of education". Over time, the institution of education has evolved both in terms of its dominant functions and in terms of the institutions involved, namely the "socialization courts" (Diaconu, 2004).

Today's society demands, more than ever, the intelligence and creative capacity of man, and especially of young people. Starting from this idea, it can be stated that the future emphasizes different learning capacities, adaptability, innovation and above all the intellectual capacities acquired through both formal education methods and new forms of education. In a society, the educational system has the role of making people socialize, so that they fulfil significant roles in the complex network of social interactions and become active members of society as well. Thus, by learning the social roles that belong to him, the young person becomes socialized, that is, he learns over time how to satisfy the needs of others in relation to him and his own. It is interesting that, as the roles in society for which the young person was to be prepared became more diverse and complex, as a result of the evolution of society, the education system multiplied its layers and expanded its socialization instances.

Education, in its broadest sense, is the process through which knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours are transmitted from one generation to the next, ensuring the continuity and advancement of human civilization (Dewey, 1916).

1.2. The Role of Education in Society

Education is tasked with preparing individuals to function effectively within society, equipping them with the intellectual, moral, and physical qualities necessary for meaningful participation in social life. According to traditional definitions, education involves a systematic set of measures aimed at developing these qualities, particularly in children and youth. The ultimate goal of education is not just the accumulation of knowledge, but the cultivation of good character, ethical behaviour, and the ability to navigate complex social environments (Bruner, 1996).

To offer education to someone is to engage in a process of "educating," a concept that goes beyond mere instruction. Education encompasses holistic development, preparing individuals for responsibilities and challenges in adulthood. It involves not only the transfer of factual knowledge but also the shaping of attitudes, values, and behaviours that are essential for personal growth and societal cohesion (Noddings, 2013).

1.3. Learning vs. Education

It is important to distinguish between "learning" and "education," as these terms, while related, have different connotations. Learning refers to the process of acquiring knowledge or skills through study, experience, or instruction. It is a continuous and often self-directed activity that can occur in various contexts, both formal and informal. Learning can happen anywhere: in the classroom, at home, in the workplace, or through personal experiences (Illeris, 2007).

Education, on the other hand, is a more structured and formalized process. It is an organized system designed to facilitate learning by providing individuals with the resources, guidance, and environment necessary to acquire knowledge and develop skills. While learning is an integral part of education, the latter encompasses a broader range of activities aimed at the comprehensive development of individuals, including moral and ethical education, socialization, and physical development (Gutek, 2014).

1.4. Philosophical Perspectives on Education

Education has been a central concern of philosophers throughout history, each offering their interpretations and theories regarding its purpose and nature. Plato, one of the most influential philosophers, defined education as "the art of forming good habits, or of developing the native aptitudes for virtue in those who possess them" (Plato, trans. 2000). For Plato, education was not merely about imparting knowledge but about shaping the character and virtues of individuals, guiding them toward a just and harmonious life.

Aristotle, a student of Plato, offered a different perspective in his work "Politics." He argued that "education should be an object of public supervision, not private." Aristotle believed that education was a public good, essential for the well-being of the state, and should therefore be governed and regulated by the state to ensure that all citizens receive the necessary education to contribute to society (Aristotle, trans. 1998).

Johann Amos Comenius, often referred to as the father of modern education, introduced the idea that education should be universal and accessible to all. In his seminal work "Didactica Magna," Comenius argued that at birth, nature endows the child only with the "seeds of science, morality, and religiosity," which can only flourish through proper education. He emphasized that education is a lifelong process of nurturing these seeds, ultimately leading to the full realization of one's potential as a human being (Comenius, 1957).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, another key figure in the history of educational thought, offered a more radical view in his work "Emile, or On Education." Rousseau proposed that education should be a natural process, free from the constraints and corruptions of society. He introduced the concept of "negative

education," which involves removing obstacles to natural development and allowing the child to grow and learn in accordance with their innate tendencies. For Rousseau, education was both an intervention and a non-intervention, guiding the child while allowing for natural growth (Rousseau, trans. 1979).

1.5. Education systems and socialization

In the field of sociology, education is viewed as a key institution within society, responsible for the socialization of individuals. Education systems refer to the set of institutions and practices within a society that are involved in the education of people during a specific historical period. These systems are dynamic, evolving in response to changes in society, technology, and culture (Ballantine & Hammack, 2015). As a subsystem of the global social system, the "institution of education" plays a crucial role in preparing individuals for their roles in society. Over time, the functions of education have expanded, with schools, universities, and other educational institutions becoming more complex and specialized. These institutions, often referred to as "socialization courts," are responsible for imparting not only academic knowledge but also the social norms, values, and behaviours necessary for individuals to integrate successfully into society (Durkheim, 1956).

In today's rapidly changing world, the demands on education are greater than ever before. Modern society requires individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also creative, adaptable, and capable of critical thinking. The future will increasingly emphasize diverse learning capacities, innovation, and the ability to navigate complex and dynamic environments. These skills are developed through both traditional forms of education and new, emerging methods that leverage technology and personalized learning approaches (Garrison & Anderson, 2003).

1.6. The expanding role of education in society

As society has evolved, so too has the role of education. The educational system now serves as a critical mechanism for socialization, helping individuals learn the social roles they will play throughout their lives. Through education, young people become socialized, learning how to meet the needs of others while also fulfilling their own needs within the context of social interactions. This process is essential for the development of active, engaged citizens who can contribute meaningfully to the community (Parsons, 1959).

As the roles within society have become more diverse and complex, the education system has also expanded its scope. Today, education is not just about preparing individuals for specific jobs or roles but about equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to navigate a rapidly changing world. This includes fostering critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to adapt to new situations— qualities that are increasingly important in the 21st century (Schleicher, 2018).

In conclusion, education is a multifaceted process that plays a fundamental role in shaping individuals and societies. It is both a means of personal development and a vital tool for social cohesion and progress. As the demands of society continue to evolve, so too will the role of education, making it an ever more critical component of human life.

2. What is generation Y?

Generation Y, also commonly referred to as Millennials, encompasses individuals born between 1981 and 2000. This generational cohort follows Generation X, which includes those born between 1965 and 1980. Generation Y has also been labeled as the Net Generation, Tech Generation, or Digital Native Generation, highlighting their deep connection with digital technologies from a young age (Howe & Strauss, 2000). These labels reflect the unique characteristics and experiences that define Millennials, particularly their proficiency with technology and their integration into a digitally connected world.

Pupils and students of the Net generation are able to use computers, the Internet for communication, information and learning purposes. "Rhetorically, Veen (2001) uses the notion of Homo Zappiens to describe the generation that has access to modern Information Technology (ICT). The ability to quickly read a text is the effect of the habit of scanning visual material by browsing the Internet, but also browsing among television channels, having the ability to watch two or three shows at once (Ulrich, 2007).

These activities develop the ability to work non-linearly, know the structure of programs and when boring sequences follow in a show. They have no problem multitasking." "Children, teenagers or young people who are fascinated by games and virtual networks, are the same ones who give theses in school, with a unique topic, sometimes they have to raise their hand to answer, they have to wait their turn and solve problems and exercises in notebooks. On the one hand, there are voices that say that the education system underestimates the capacity of this generation. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the education system needs other instructional approaches" (Karlson, 2003, p.20).

In the book Millennials rising: The next great generation, it is revealed that the name "Millennials" recognizes their ability to use millennial technologies, without explicitly defining this fact. They are also considered the generation capable of changing the world, with faster development than their parents' generation. They were designated and raised as special and have different expectations than the previous generation. During the decade of the 1990s, there was a discrepancy between the indifference to the childhood of Generation X and the increased attention given to the childhood of Generation Y. For example, an entire social marketing industry developed to persuade children to behave better, which to provide them with models. There have been more and more children's books and

magazines, songs and films, children's TV and radio programs, websites - with anything and everything - for children, which have experienced rapid growth in the media, but which have it also had the negative effect of making young up-and-comers believe that many things are guaranteed to them and that they are entitled to them. They were exposed to models like Barbie, her partner Ken, or superhero teams (William Strauss and Neil Howe, 2000).

From a cultural and social point of view, when the topic of generation is addressed, we are not talking about exceptional cases, but about general features, about a nucleus, like a center of gravity to which we refer. As with any new generation, as with any young living organism, the direction of change is more important than where it is. This direction of change may best reveal the generation's collective self-image and sense of its destiny. From this point of view, Millennials are indeed special, they change the direction of long-term change and have better behaviours and results than many of their parents and adult leaders today. The higher the demands in education, academics and then on the labour market, which "Millennials" face, the more the results and achievements can be greater than those of the previous generation.

2.1. The identity and characteristics of generation Y

Generation Y is distinct from previous generations due to its formative experiences with the internet, mobile technology, and social media. This generation grew up alongside the rapid advancement of information technology, shaping their behaviours, attitudes, and worldviews. Millennials are often described as being more confident, assertive, and expressive than previous generations, traits that are frequently attributed to their upbringing in an era of social and cultural change (Twenge, 2006).

Jean Twenge's book, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—and More Miserable than Ever Before* (2006), offers a critical examination of this generation, describing them as the "Multi Generation." This term emphasizes their multicultural, multimedia, and multiracial identities, reflecting the diverse and interconnected world in which they have come of age. Twenge argues that Millennials have been raised to believe in their uniqueness and entitlement, which has both positive and negative consequences for their mental health and societal participation.

2.2. Technological proficiency and learning styles

Millennials are often characterized by their exceptional ability to navigate digital technologies, which has significant implications for their learning styles and educational experiences. As students, members of Generation Y are adept at using computers and the internet for communication, information retrieval, and learning

purposes. Veen (2001) coined the term "Homo Zappiens" to describe this generation, emphasizing their skill in multitasking and their preference for non-linear ways of working with information.

Homo Zappiens are known for their ability to quickly scan and process visual material, a skill honed by frequent internet browsing and channel surfing on television. This ability has led to a preference for multimedia learning environments that engage multiple senses and allow for interactive, on-demand access to information (Veen, 2001). Consequently, traditional linear approaches to education, such as lectures and step-by-step problem-solving, may be less effective for this generation. Karlson (2003) points out that the education system may underestimate the capabilities of Millennials, suggesting that new instructional approaches are needed to align with their strengths in multitasking and digital literacy.

2.3. The influence of media and marketing on generation Y

The rise of Generation Y coincided with significant changes in media and marketing practices, particularly those targeting children and adolescents. The 1990s saw the emergence of a vast social marketing industry aimed at shaping the behaviours and values of young people. This period marked a shift from the relative indifference to childhood experienced by Generation X to a more intense focus on the upbringing of Millennials. This focus was reflected in the proliferation of children's books, magazines, songs, films, TV shows, radio programs, and websites, all designed to engage and influence the younger generation (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

This media saturation had both positive and negative effects on Millennials. On the one hand, it provided them with a wealth of resources and role models, such as Barbie, Ken, and various superhero teams, that shaped their aspirations and self-image. On the other hand, it contributed to a sense of entitlement and unrealistic expectations about life, as Millennials were led to believe that many things were guaranteed to them (Twenge, 2006). This sense of entitlement has been a point of critique, as it is often linked to the challenges Millennials face in adapting to the realities of adulthood, particularly in the workforce.

2.4. Cultural and social dynamics of generation Y

When discussing the cultural and social characteristics of Generation Y, it is important to focus on the general features that define this cohort, rather than exceptional cases. Generation Y's collective self-image and sense of destiny are shaped by their experiences and the social context in which they were raised. This generation is seen as being more socially conscious and globally minded than their predecessors, with a strong emphasis on diversity, inclusion, and social justice (Pew Research Center, 2014).

Millennials are often perceived as agents of change, driving shifts in social norms and behaviours. They are known for challenging traditional structures and advocating for greater flexibility in work and life. This generational shift is evident in their approach to work, where they value work-life balance, meaningful work, and the use of technology to enhance productivity and collaboration (Meister & Willyerd, 2010).

2.5. Educational and economic expectations of generation Y

The educational experiences of Millennials have been shaped by the higher demands placed on them compared to previous generations. The increased emphasis on academic achievement, standardized testing, and competition for college admissions has led to a generation that is highly educated but also highly stressed (Twenge, 2017). Millennials were often told that they were special and that they could achieve anything, leading to high expectations for their careers and personal lives. However, these expectations have also led to significant challenges, particularly in the labor market. The economic conditions that Millennials have faced, including the Great Recession of 2008, have made it difficult for many to achieve the financial stability and career success they were promised. Despite these challenges, Millennials are often praised for their resilience, adaptability, and commitment to personal and professional growth (Pew Research Center, 2014).

In conclusion, Generation Y is a complex and multifaceted cohort defined by their technological proficiency, multicultural identities, and high expectations for themselves and their futures. As they continue to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, their impact on society will likely be profound, shaping the direction of social, cultural, and economic change for years to come.

3. Generation Y in Romania

Generation Y, or Millennials, in Romania shares many characteristics with their global counterparts, such as technological proficiency, a strong orientation toward digital communication, and a distinct set of social and cultural values shaped by rapid globalization and technological advancement. However, the unique socio-economic and historical context of Romania has also significantly influenced the experiences and attitudes of this generation. Born between 1981 and 2000, Romanian Millennials grew up during a period of dramatic change, including the transition from communism to a market economy, integration into the European Union, and the rapid adoption of digital technologies.

3.1. Socio-economic background

The socio-economic context of Romania has played a crucial role in shaping the experiences of Generation Y. Following the 1989 revolution, Romania underwent a period of intense transformation, moving from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented one. This transition brought about both opportunities and challenges for the emerging Millennial generation. As Romania integrated into the European Union in 2007, Millennials were exposed to new opportunities for education, employment, and mobility within Europe (Voicu & Voicu, 2017).

Despite these advancements, Romanian Millennials have also faced significant economic challenges. The 2008 financial crisis hit Romania hard, leading to high unemployment rates, particularly among young people. This economic instability has affected the financial independence and career trajectories of many Millennials, contributing to a delay in major life milestones such as buying a home or starting a family (Popescu, 2013). The precarious nature of the job market has also led to a rise in temporary and part-time employment among young people, further exacerbating economic insecurity (Voicu, 2016).

3.2. Educational attainment and aspirations

Education has been a central focus for Romanian Millennials, driven by both personal aspirations and societal expectations. The expansion of higher education in Romania, particularly after the country's EU accession, has led to a significant increase in the number of young people pursuing university degrees (Maricutoiu & Sulea, 2019). However, the quality of education and the alignment of academic programs with labour market needs have been ongoing concerns. Many Romanian Millennials have sought education and employment opportunities abroad, contributing to a significant brain drain from the country (Sandu, 2017).

The emphasis on education among Romanian Millennials reflects broader societal values, where academic achievement is often seen as a pathway to social mobility and economic security. However, the mismatch between educational attainment and available job opportunities has led to frustration and disillusionment among some young people. This disconnect has also fuelled emigration, as many Millennials seek better opportunities in other European countries (Voicu, 2016).

3.3. Cultural identity and social values

The cultural identity of Romanian Millennials is characterized by a blend of traditional values and modern, global influences. While they have been exposed to Western cultural norms through media, travel, and education, they also maintain a strong connection to Romanian traditions and values. This duality is evident in their attitudes toward family, work, and social life. For instance, while Millennials in

Romania may prioritize individualism and self-expression, they also place a high value on family ties and community support (Maricutoiu & Sulea, 2019).

Religious beliefs and practices continue to play a significant role in the lives of many Romanian Millennials, although there is a noticeable trend toward secularization, particularly in urban areas. The influence of the Orthodox Church remains strong, but younger generations are increasingly questioning traditional religious practices and exploring new forms of spirituality (Popescu, 2013).

3.4. Political engagement and civic participation

Political engagement among Romanian Millennials has been shaped by their experiences growing up in a post-communist society. While there is a general scepticism toward political institutions and leaders, this generation has shown a growing interest in civic activism and social causes. The rise of social media has provided a platform for Millennials to engage in political discourse, organize protests, and advocate for change. Notably, the 2015 Collective nightclub fire, which led to widespread protests against government corruption, highlighted the power of Millennials in driving political and social change in Romania (Voicu & Voicu, 2017). Despite their increasing activism, voter turnout among Romanian Millennials remains relatively low compared to older generations. This apathy is often attributed to disillusionment with the political system and a lack of trust in politicians. However, when they do engage, Millennials tend to support progressive policies, particularly those related to anti-corruption, social justice, and environmental sustainability (Maricutoiu & Sulea, 2019).

3.5. Economic participation and challenges

The economic participation of Romanian Millennials has been marked by both opportunity and adversity. On one hand, the country's integration into the European Union has opened up new markets and opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation. Romanian Millennials are increasingly involved in the tech industry, start-ups, and other sectors that benefit from digitalization and globalization (Popescu, 2013).

On the other hand, economic challenges persist, particularly in terms of job stability and income levels. Many Millennials face difficulties in securing well-paid, long-term employment, leading to a reliance on temporary or freelance work. This economic instability has broader implications for their financial security and life choices, including decisions about marriage, children, and home ownership (Voicu, 2016).

Romanian Millennials, like their counterparts around the world, are a generation shaped by the unique socio-economic and cultural context of their country. While they share many characteristics with global Millennials, such as

technological proficiency and a strong orientation toward digital communication, they are also deeply influenced by the specific historical and economic circumstances of post-communist Romania. As they continue to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, Romanian Millennials are likely to play a significant role in shaping the future of their country.

4. Generation Y on the labour market in Romania and the new forms of education

Through the conducted study, a series of realities regarding Generation Y in Romania could be ascertained. The questionnaires regarding "Millennials" were completed by a number of 107 respondents aged between 18 and 33. Regarding the gender of the respondents, it emerged that 77.9% were female, respectively 81 participants, and 22.1% were male, respectively 23 participants. Regarding completed or ongoing studies, most respondents have higher education, of which 34 respondents have completed or are ongoing master's studies. Their answers underline the impact of alternative forms of education, voluntary activities, self-learning as well as the European youth programs in the lives of young people and their role in acquiring useful skills on the labor market among the young beneficiaries.

Figure 1. Gender of the respondents
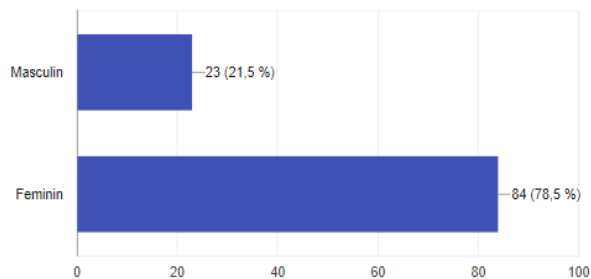
Source: author's representation

To the question "Do you consider that the education you received prepared you for the labour market?" If not, what did you miss?" the answers were varied. Of the respondents, only 23 categorically stated that they believe that the education they received prepared them for the labor market. Other variants in which the respondents confirmed, but added additional mentions were: "Yes (studies abroad)"; "to some extent, yes"; "I didn't miss anything."; "mostly, yes. I consider that the diversity of the subjects was quite wide, and this slightly hindered the specialization towards a

specific field."; "Yes and no, yes in terms of hardness, not in terms of practice"; "Yes, education has prepared me well enough.".

Regarding what was missing and what could be improved in the education system, the answers were also varied, and some were even applied and very interesting. Starting from the idea "If the education received in school did not prepare you for the labor market, what exactly was missing?" the following ideas are counted: "No. I believe that there was a greater applicability of the subjects studied. (2 answers)"; "I think that there is not enough practice or voluntary activities (2 answers)"; "The educational context does not seem to me to be related to the requirements of the market, and the methods are outdated."; "no, there was a lack of application of the acquired knowledge on the labor market"; "No, unfortunately it didn't prepare me. More practice was needed"; "Not quite, not exactly. Universities place more emphasis on theory than practice."; "No, I lacked practical training."; "No, the applicable part of the theory was missing"; "Not necessarily, I believe that practice should have been much more present in the courses received so far.". Generation Y also notices that in addition to the practical applicability of what they learn in theory, they also lack career guidance. Some of the answers suggested this idea, respectively: "No, in no case was I prepared; I missed the practical part, the exposure to what an employer is looking for, guidance and career counseling."; "No, I lacked better orientation/direction."; "Guidance in choosing a career"; "Not quite, not exactly. I believe that a real professional guidance program was missing."

Some of the members of Generation Y also have very interesting and useful suggestions about how the education received could be improved through new forms of education such as: "I believe that in schools there must also be subjects about human rights, how to manage money, the economy, human rights to the employee etc. and providing first aid. Unfortunately, we learn interesting things that we encounter in life, but the most important things (I mentioned them above) are not taught in schools." Another answer worth mentioning is the following: "If we refer strictly to the education received in schools, I believe that finishing an educational cycle (especially at the state) says about the future employee that he has a serious learning capacity and the ability to take things to good ending I know few colleagues who practice in the same field in which they studied, but there is always the desire to learn, improve and overcome the condition.". From what the young people of Generation Y have learned from the old forms of education, the following idea emerges, according to some answers: "The theory helped me very little, but practically, it got me used to working in a team, to following a schedule and some routine, meet deadlines, seek as much information as possible, from as many sources as possible to form an objective opinion. I believe that practically any form of education kind of misses its purpose of preparing us for the labor market, that is if we don't talk about vocational schools, which are so disregarded." Starting from alternative forms or new forms of education, some of the young people of Generation Y believe that: "Subjects are totally meaningless. The school prepared me

exclusively for academic activities totally devoid of any practical application. Totally not adapted. Higher math, physics and chemistry as well. Way too advanced for high school. Both in middle school and in high school and college, 80% of teachers were perceived as unprepared or unsuitable for the teaching activity [...] Everything I know today is thanks to my self-learning ability or the ability of my parents to pay for private meditations." Regarding the fields in which the young participants of the Case Study work and are active on the labor market, a number of 27 respondents work in the economic environment or financial audit, another part works in Human Resources, Marketing, IT, translations, advertising, sales, call center, in the educational field, energy field, foreign affairs, trade, health, in the press, editorial, social assistance, veterinary medicine, telecommunications, technical assistance, logistics, event organization, civil construction, services, architecture, environmental engineering, financial consulting, legal, NGO environment, either they are still students and work in parallel, or they are just studying. To the question "Do you expect the socio-political situation in the country to improve in the next 12 months?", 87.5% of the participants answered negatively and only 12.5% answered positively. This answer shows that the generation's optimism regarding the vision of the future in the short and medium term is no longer as optimistic as in past years and is mostly pessimistic.

Figure 2. Do you expect the socio-political situation in the country to improve in the next 12 months?"
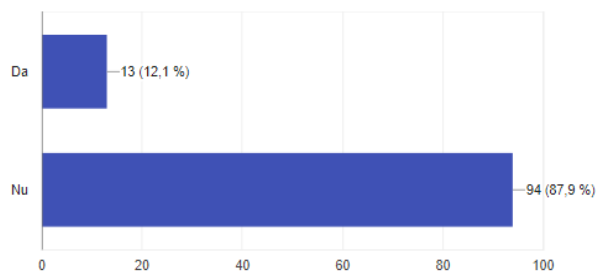
Source: author's representation

To the following question: "Do you expect to have a better financial and emotional situation than that of your parents?", 83.7% of respondents answered affirmatively, and 16.3% answered negatively. This answer shows that, compared to their parents' Generation Z, Generation Y has an optimistic outlook and expects to surpass in long-term achievements what their parents achieved emotionally and socially.

Figure 3. Do you expect to have a better financial and emotional situation than that of your parents?
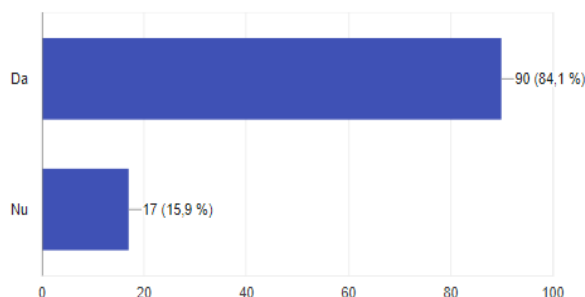
Source: author's representation

Regarding Generation Y's perspective on social progress, when asked "Are you optimistic about the social progress of the world in general?", 61.5% answered yes and 38.5% were negative. From these answers it is clear that Generation Y is mostly optimistic about the social progress of the world in general, which is also clear from the study "The 2017 Deloitte Millennial Survey".[1]

To the question: "What worries you most about the future?", the answers were: 27.9% corruption, 17.3% climate problems, 15.4% social conflicts, 11.5% political tensions , 7.7% concern for health, 5.8% economic issues, 1.9% robots or technology taking over some existing jobs and, to a very small extent, all of the above issues. When they were asked: "Do you consider that the multinational business environment contributes to the development of Romanian society?", 91.3% answered affirmatively, and 8.7% answered negatively.

Also related to multinational companies, to the question: "What do you think is the impact of multinational companies on the future?", 54.8% answered "They have a positive impact", 35.6% answered "They could solve existing problems through social responsibility (CSR- Corporate Social Responsibility), and 9.6% answered that "They have a negative impact". Regarding teamwork in the place where young people are active, to the question: "Do you consider that you work well in the team you are in?", 87.5% answered affirmatively, and 12.5% answered negatively. To the question: "What aspect do you find most important and supported at work?", answered in proportion: 84.1% "Training and continuing professional development", 10.6% skills, and 5.8% education. Following the question: "Do you

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[1] The 2017 Deloitte Millennial Survey: Apprehemsive millennials: seeking stability and opportunities in an uncertain world: https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-deloitte-millennial-survey-2017-executive-summary.pdf.
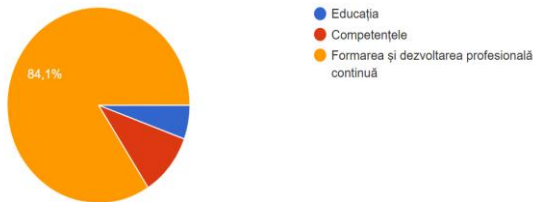
feel that at work you are given opportunities to make a social impact that matters?", 46.2% answered yes, 27.9% answered no, and 26% answered "don't know".

Figure 4. What worries you most about the future?
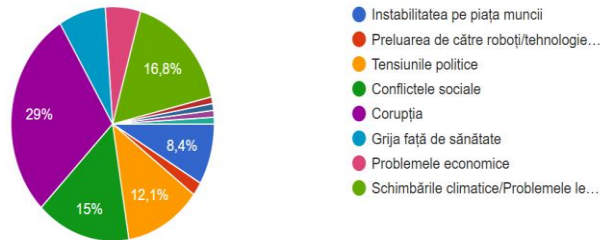
Source: author's representation

Figure 5: "What aspect do you find most important and supported at work?"

Source: author's representation

To the last question: "What do you think are the most important aspects that young people look for in order to work for a long time in the same company?" respondents had different answers.   In a few words, the members of Generation Y involved in the case study claimed 44.2% that "opportunities for development" were important, 22.1% financial aspects, 7.7% stability, also 7.7 % flexibility, 6.7% international environment, 4.8% continuous learning opportunities, and a smaller proportion of respondents completed that they would tick all the above or added: civic spirit, team, money, social status, and stability.

Conclusions

In conclusion, in the current context of accelerated social innovation, young people must constantly adapt, improve, or reorient themselves in their careers. New learning methods come as an alternative or compensation for formal learning that fails to keep up with the demands of the labour market. Some employers offer

specific training and education, but they also emphasize the skills acquired in college. From the examples of young people, in the United States of America and in some universities in Europe there are counsellors for pupils and students in all periods of transition and study to help them succeed in their chosen path. This rule does not apply in Romania everywhere, or if it does it is only at the legislative level. Young people need advice, guidance, and support throughout their personal and professional development. On this new road, young people must be social innovators, have skills such as the ability to learn quickly, communication, teamwork, etc. Taking all these into consideration the impact of European youth programs on the lives of young people has a positive role in acquiring useful skills on the labour market among the young beneficiaries. Also, the long-life learning process and the European youth programs such as Erasmus Plus and the European Solidarity Corps continue to open minds and change the lives of the beneficiaries and support them to gain useful skills on the labour market.

The findings and conclusions presented underscore the critical need for young people to continuously adapt and improve their skills in an era of rapid social innovation. The evolving demands of the labour market are placing increased pressure on traditional educational systems, which often struggle to keep pace. Consequently, alternative learning methods and opportunities have emerged, playing a crucial role in bridging the gap between formal education and the skills required by modern employers.

One of the key insights from this study is the growing importance of non-formal education and youth programs, such as Erasmus Plus and the European Solidarity Corps. These initiatives are not only helping young people acquire essential skills for the labor market, but they are also fostering a mindset of lifelong learning. This approach is particularly valuable in the current context, where the ability to learn quickly, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively are highly prized by employers.

The role of career counselling and guidance is another critical aspect highlighted in the discussion. In countries like the United States and certain European nations, structured support systems are in place to assist students during key transitions in their academic and professional lives. This includes career counselling services that provide personalized guidance, helping students navigate the complexities of choosing and succeeding in their chosen career paths. These services have proven effective in enhancing students' readiness for the labor market, thus contributing to their overall success.

However, the situation in Romania presents a stark contrast. While legislation may mandate the provision of counselling services, the actual implementation of these services is inconsistent, and often limited. This gap in support leaves many young Romanians without the necessary guidance during critical periods of their education and career development. This inconsistency highlights a significant area for improvement, suggesting that Romania could benefit from adopting best

practices from other countries where career counselling is more integrated into the education system.

The discussion also brings to light the necessity for young people to become social innovators. In a rapidly changing world, merely possessing traditional academic qualifications is no longer sufficient. Instead, there is a growing emphasis on developing a broader set of skills, including adaptability, creativity, and social responsibility. These skills are increasingly recognized as crucial for both personal and professional success, particularly in a labor market that values innovation and the ability to respond to emerging challenges.

European youth programs play a vital role in this regard. By providing opportunities for young people to engage in diverse experiences, these programs not only enhance their professional skills but also contribute to their personal growth. Participants in programs like Erasmus Plus often report increased cultural awareness, improved language skills, and a greater sense of European identity. These experiences are invaluable in preparing young people for the complexities of the modern labour market, where cross-cultural communication and global awareness are increasingly important.

Moreover, the long-term impact of these programs should not be underestimated. As participants carry the skills and knowledge gained from these experiences into their careers, they contribute to a more dynamic and innovative workforce. This, in turn, benefits the broader economy by fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability.

In conclusion, the discussion emphasizes the importance of both formal and non-formal education in preparing young people for the labor market. While traditional education remains a cornerstone of career preparation, the rapidly changing demands of the modern workforce necessitate a more holistic approach. This includes the integration of alternative learning opportunities, robust career counselling services, and the development of a broad set of skills that go beyond academic achievements. For countries like Romania, there is a clear need to enhance support systems for young people, ensuring that they have access to the guidance and resources necessary to succeed in a competitive global labor market. By embracing these changes and continuing to invest in programs that support lifelong learning and skill development, we can better equip the next generation to thrive in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.

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